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Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Chief, Contact Branch

DATE: 16 July 1949

FROM : Acting Chief, Seattle Office

Memo No. 277

SUBJECT: Dr. Nicholas Poppe (Inner Asia Project)

1. As you probably know, Dr. Poppe came to the US from the British zone of Germany within the last six weeks. His sponsor for admittance was Mr. John Davies, Political Planning Group of the Department of State. It is apparent that CIA has some connection with Dr. Poppe because we notice he has been the source of several OO-B reports. For the record we will attach all biographical information we have on subject, knowing that you have as much, and probably more, information about him.
2. According to Dr. George E. Taylor and Dr. William B. Ballis, both of the Russian and Far Eastern Institute of the University of Washington, the University was primarily responsible for Poppe's entrance into the US. The University has been interested in securing Poppe's academic knowledge in connection with the development and continuance of their Inner Asia Project. A firm offer has been extended to and accepted by Poppe which calls for an annual salary of \$6,000. The duration of his possible stay at the University is not definite - his contract could be extended, if necessary, at the end of a year's service. Taylor and Ballis both feel that he should be employed for not less than three years if the full value of Poppe's service is to be received. The possible expenditure of \$18,000 seems a little steep to them since the institute has suffered a severe budget cut.
3. Anticipating that CIA might be interested in utilizing Poppe on projects requiring considerable research, Taylor and Ballis asked to see us to determine CIA's attitude. They feel that Poppe's knowledge of Central Asia, Siberia and Mongolia would be extremely helpful to any intelligence organization and especially to CIA. To make a long story short, they would like CIA to financially underwrite Poppe to the tune of \$6,000 per year or at least pay half of his salary. The University would be willing to make available to Poppe all material they have on the areas mentioned above and an equitable division of Poppe's time would be made commensurate with the financial assistance rendered by CIA. If we paid his entire salary we could expect him to devote at least 75% of his time to CIA work and if we participated in paying only half, we could expect about 35% of his time. They feel that the University's facilities have some value in terms that could be reduced to cash. Right now this proposition is rather nebulous but we think it warrants considerable consideration on the part of CIA as Poppe seems to possess a rare knowledge and should be exploited over a long period of time.
4. In order for such a venture to be completely satisfactory, it would be necessary for CIA to furnish clear-cut requirements which would fall within his field of knowledge and obvious ability. We feel that we could enter into a contract with the University of Washington stipulating

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that if Poppe were not earning his salt that CIA funds would be stopped. Both Taylor and Ballis indicate that if CIA would desire cover for their interest that this could be provided very easily since directives or requirements could be handled by our office through Taylor and Ballis only.

5. We would appreciate a teletype message giving us your preliminary ideas in connection with this matter because Taylor and Ballis are anxious to determine what definite action they will have to take within the very near future. It appears that Poppe has other offers and if the University is unable to make an attractive projected offer Poppe may decide to take employment elsewhere.

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